

## Disclosures Stir Washington

# Birch Aims Spotlited

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### Washington

A small, radical, right-wing organization, the John Birch Society, has stirred an unusual amount of Washington attention, produced demands for investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee, a statement of disassociation by the National Association of Manufacturers, and denunciation by three senators.

The Justice Department said March 31 that "a growing number of inquiries received about the John Birch Society has made it a matter of concern to the Attorney General."

The society, founded by Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., retired Belmont, Mass., candy manufacturer, reports it has from one to 100 chapters in each of 34 states and the District of Columbia. Members say it is dedicated to fight communism by its own tough techniques—through organization of "front" groups, infiltration

of other groups, such as Parent-Teacher Associations, telephone calls, letters to congressmen, whatever means will accomplish the end.

Representative Edgar A. Hiestand (R) of California, a member, declares that "it is a society of individualists dedicated to fighting communism. They are violently anti-Communist."

### Society's Name Explained

Mr. Hiestand told a press conference March 31 that the society was not a secret or Fascist organization. Besides anti-communism, he said its aim was to promote "less and less government."

He said extremist statements by founder Welch had been misinterpreted, taken out of context, or made many years ago. Mr. Welch has said that President Eisenhower, the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, and Central Intelligence Agency Chief Allen W. Dulles were Communist agents or Communist dupes.

An organization of which many citizens have never heard, the society is named after John Birch, a young Fundamentalist Baptist missionary from Georgia who served as an intelligence officer in China during World War II and was killed 10 days after V-J Day by Chinese Communists. The society was founded later.

In Mr. Birch's name, members of the society are urged to write letters to congressmen, chambers of commerce and others, to push campaigns conceived by Mr. Welch as being anti-Communist.

### Impeachment Sought

These objectives include the impeachment of Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, repeal of the income tax law, opposition to the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, denunciation of the United Nations, termination of foreign aid programs, and an end to cultural or any other exchanges with the Soviet Union.

These extremist advocacies, the authoritarian setup of the society, and the approval of what Mr. Welch admits are sometimes "mean and dirty" tactics, have led to expressions of deep concern in Washington, and elsewhere.

In a Senate speech Senator Thomas J. Dodd (D) of Connecticut equated ultrarightist smears against the nation's respected leaders with the naive softheaded approach of ultra-liberals "who refuse to believe communism to be all evil."

"The evidence suggests that many of those who joined the John Birch Society did so in ignorance of the real views of the leadership of the organization," Senator Dodd, strong advocate of a national freedom academy, declared.

### Presidents Assailed

"Four years ago Mr. Welch brought out a book entitled 'The Politician' in which he assailed Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower; the late Secretary of State and many others as Communist dupes or Communist agents."

"To accuse people like President Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles of being Communist agents is an affront to both decency and intelligence," Senator Dodd continued. "It brings our leaders and our institutions into disrepute, it sows division."

Technique of the John Birch Society is illustrated in North Dakota, where members were pushing a constitutional amendment for repeal of the federal income tax and liquidation of 700 government agencies. Senator Milton R. Young (R) of that state sent the state Senate a telegram pointing out that the proposal might kill the Garrison Dam irrigation diversion project in North Dakota. This brought a letter-writing and telephoning campaign down on Senator Young.

### Investigation Proposed

Senator Young, Republican conservative, declares that Mr. Welch's accusations against President Eisenhower and others goes "beyond anything the late Joe McCarthy ever thought of."

On the other hand a Senate internal affairs subcommittee has described the society as a "patriotic organization."

Representative Henry S. Reuss (D) of Wisconsin urged that a society "reported to have stigmatized" national leaders as Communists should be investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Republican members of the com-

mittee were doubtful about the value of an investigation.

Representative Noah M. Mason (R) of Illinois said his mail had been heavy from outside his district urging him to support impeachment of Chief Justice Warren, but that "all the letters have gone in the wastebasket."

Currently the society is promoting the House Un-American Activities Committee's motion picture "Operation Abolition."

### Resolution Adopted

The National Association of Manufacturers has adopted a board resolution which, without mentioning the society, affirms the NAM's confidence in Mr. Eisenhower. Its executive vice-president, Charles R. Sligh, Jr., said the NAM "has no connection with the John Birch Society, and never will."

Council members of the society have, included Spruille Braden, former United States Ambassador, T. Coleman Andrews, former collector of internal revenue who ran for president on an "abolish the income tax" platform, Clarence E. Manion, former dean of the Notre Dame Law School, and the late Alfred Kohberg, supporter of the so-called "China lobby."

[Meantime another congressman, John R. Rousslet (R) of California, confirmed that he also is a member. Mr. Rousslet, home for the Easter weekend, issued a statement at his home in San Gabriel, Calif., saying he took out a year's membership last September, according to the Associated Press.

[Mr. Rousslet told a newsman he knows of several other Congress members who are in the society but he said he felt it was their place to identify themselves.

[Members of the society, he said, study and learn about communism. "They have become concerned about the Communist conspiracy," Mr. Rousslet said. "This is what hurts the Communists."

Senator Thomas H. Kuchel (R) of California and former Vice-President Richard M. Nixon have denounced the society and its allegedly unscrupulous techniques. Mr. Nixon wrote the Los Angeles Times, which had inveighed editorially against the society's aims:

"One of the most indelible lessons of human history is that those who adopt the doctrine that the end justifies the means inevitably find that the means become the end."

Observers reasoned, however, that the society might still be effective with its techniques inside PTA groups, churches, business organizations, public libraries, schools, and colleges.